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18 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for National Intelligence

SUBJECT : (1) Near East and South Asia Estimative Work Underway
(2) Thoughts on Presidential Validation of Estimative Work

1. The following Community estimative work is underway:

[Redacted]

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2. Planned major NIEs for Calendar Year 1977 include one on [Redacted] concentrating on an estimate of future [Redacted] foreign policy, and one on [Redacted]

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3. In light of recent political changes in [Redacted] and a tendency I have noted at PRM-10 (South Asia) meetings among middle-level policy-makers to explore very activist roles for the US in that country, a comprehensive estimate of the prospects for [Redacted] be seriously considered. Were such an estimate authorized, it should probably concentrate on the strategic importance of the country during the rest of this century with a heavy input of economic analysis.

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4. Most estimates are in fact first conceived of within the Intelligence Community itself. In my experience, however, it has been useful to seek external validation of the proposed requirement and to encourage users to make suggestions at the time terms of reference are agreed upon. This invariably improves the pertinence of the estimate. Furthermore, so long as the NIOs are operating without staffs of their own, it assists both the quality and the enthusiasm of the drafting help received from other offices.

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5. A weakness of the present system for validating estimative work is that the intelligence representatives from agencies other than CIA itself are ultimately controlled by agency heads who are not part of the Intelligence Community but are themselves primarily policy-makers. In rare cases, therefore, intelligence estimates which should be prepared may be opposed by the potential primary users. In such cases it would be extremely helpful were the DCI able to obtain Presidential validation or guidance. The need for such high-level blessing should occur rarely, but the ability to pursue this course would be highly desirable, at least so long as the NIOs are merely chairmen of drafting committees over whom they have no personal authority.



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National Intelligence Officer for the
Near East and South Asia

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